

NSC BRIEFING

6 April 1955

BACKGROUND - FIRST PURGE IN CHINA

- I. The 4 April announcement of the fall of Politburo member Kao Kang (a "suicide") and party organization chief Jao Shu-shih (presumably jailed) is official confirmation of the first major purge of the Chinese Communist Party leadership since the Peiping regime was founded in 1949 (indeed, the first since 1938).
 - A. The announcement comes as no surprise. Both men have been conspicuous by their absence from the news since early 1954--the only two Chinese Communist leaders at the very top level to be so ignored.
 - B. Seven lesser figures were purged with Kao and Jao. Six of them had been Kao's subordinates in Manchuria.
 - C. Despite press speculation, there is nothing to indicate that either Kao or Jao came to grief as a result of bonds with deposed Soviet leaders or disagreements with present ones.
- II. The purge of the two men climaxes a Chinese Communist "unity" drive, explicitly aimed at the party leadership, which began more than a year ago (February 1954).

DOCUMENT NO. 5
NO CHANGE IN CLASS. ☐
☒ DECLASSIFIED
CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S C
AUTH. NR 70-2
DATE: 10/11/00 REVIEWER: 000514

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- A. At that time Liu Shao-chi, Mao Tse-tung's top deputy, denounced efforts by unnamed party leaders to carve out "independent kingdoms."
 - B. This charge apparently referred to efforts by regional bosses to resist Peiping's central authority, as well as efforts by bigwigs in the Peiping government to build up personal followings.
 - C. The 4 April communiqué specifically accuses Kao and Jao of establishing an "anti-party alliance" for these purposes.
- III. Both Kao and Jao have had good chances to commit such "crimes."
- A. Kao had been the party's boss in Manchuria, holding all of that vital area's top jobs simultaneously. Jao had been party boss in prosperous, urbanized East China.
 - B. After moving to Peiping two years ago, Kao was chairman of the powerful State Planning Committee, while Jao had been the party's director of personnel for all of China.
 - C. The two may also have resisted central authority in other ways besides building "kingdoms."

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1. Jao is accused of adopting a "rightist" policy in East China, which suggests a basic policy disagreement over the speed of socialization.
2. Kao, as chief planner, may well have differed with other leaders on economic policies.

IV. As for their fates, the communiqué contains a sort of Marxist epitaph for Kao--he "committed suicide as an expression of his ultimate betrayal of the party."

A. Peiping says of Jao--evidently in jail--he "has never shown any signs of repentance and persists in an attitude of attacking the party."

B. With unconscious irony, the communiqué summarizes the consequences of the purge: the party "has never before had such unity and solidarity."